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Fiftieth Session

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Tuesday, 14 November 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 47 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to inform the Assembly that the representatives of Guyana and Peru have requested to participate in the debate on this item. Inasmuch as the list of speakers was closed yesterday at noon, may I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Guyana in the list of speakers? There is no objection. Guyana is therefore included in the list.

May I ask the Assembly whether there is any objection to the inclusion of Peru in the list of speakers? There is no objection. Peru is therefore included in the list.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): Let me thank you, Sir, and the General Assembly for acceding to our request and our sister delegation of Antigua and Barbuda for allowing us to speak in its stead.

The countries of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) represented here at the United Nations — Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago — have asked me to place on record our views on item 47 of our agenda, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". I shall do so now as briefly as I can.

We believe that, as evidenced by the several reports and non-papers now before us, the Open-ended Working Group that was tasked with studying the question has made appreciable progress in fulfilling the mandate given to it by resolution 48/26. Over the past two years, Member States have amply ventilated all aspects of the issue. Under the able direction of Mr. Amaral do Freitas's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, assisted by the indefatigable Vice-Chairman Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland, Ambassador Chew Tai Soo of Singapore and, more latterly, Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, and of course by our very able Secretariat, we have succeeded in putting forward a number of imaginative and constructive proposals for the Council's reform. It is now possible, we think, to discern an outline of the future shape and functions of this most important organ.

Among the features on which broad agreement now appears to exist are, first, an appropriate increase in the membership of the Council to make it more representative of the enlarged Assembly; secondly, the need for recognition of the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of equitable representation; and thirdly, the desirability of enhancing the effectiveness and transparency of the Council's operation.

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Ideas have not been wanting as to how these desiderata might be achieved. Indeed, there is such a plethora of proposals that it is difficult to reconcile them. However, we cannot and must not accept defeat in this challenge to find common ground.

What is the way forward? CARICOM States do not feel that any useful purpose would be served by retracing terrain already covered. We must now proceed to a more detailed analysis of the various routes that have been suggested in order to determine in which direction we can proceed. Accordingly, our deliberations must now be more focused, with the aim of identifying those proposals that can command consensus. As in the past, the Working Group's bureau and the Secretariat can provide useful guidance on those specific areas upon which concentration must now turn.

Once these have been determined, the Open-ended Working Group should begin to examine each outstanding issue with a view to narrowing differences of position and forging consensus. In the interest of orderly and productive discussion, reasonable time-frames could be set for each issue, allowing, of course, for a return to those on which agreement proves elusive. It would also facilitate our task if the Group's procedures could be made a bit more agile, and flexible enough to provide for a rapid exchange of views rather than a mere repetition of set speeches. This format, we believe, might suffice to encourage and elicit further agreement. If it is felt that this procedure needs to be supplemented by informal consultations, either with regional groups or with like-minded States, CARICOM States would have no objection, provided that the transparency of these consultations and our own participation in them could be guaranteed.

So much for the Working Group's procedures. Let me now quickly address the principal substantive issues which remain to be settled, *inter alia* the means of ensuring equitable representation, the ideal number of members of the Council and the question of the veto.

Although not all are members of the Non-Aligned Movement, CARICOM States find themselves in general agreement with the fundamental thrust of the position enunciated recently at the Movement's eleventh Summit, held in Cartagena, Colombia. As small States in the international community, we attach the highest importance to democracy and equity not only in our own internal affairs but also in our international relations. We will therefore be concerned to see that these principles are taken fully into account in the reform of the Council. Our right to serve on the Council and to make our contribution to the cause of peace must be assured. On these matters there can be no compromise.

In so far as the optimal number of members in any reconstituted Council is concerned, we are willing to show reasonable flexibility. While favouring the middle to upper end in a range of 20 to 30 members, we are not as yet wedded to a precise figure. Our final determination will be made once we are persuaded that the criteria of equitable distribution and the Council's effectiveness have been satisfied. Our sense of equity does not make it easy for us to contemplate additional permanent members, particularly from any one region. However, we will not be averse to considering any formula that offers a feasible balance which does not harm our fundamental principles. Our analysis of the various proposals before us leads us to believe that some accommodation is possible.

An important element in the reform exercise must be, in the view of CARICOM States, the provision of adequate financing arrangements for the Council's operations. As countries with limited resources, we find our mounting peace-keeping assessments quite burdensome. We are therefore prepared to consider, in keeping with the doctrine of common but differentiated responsibilities, the suggestion made for a system to be devised that would make it possible for States that are economically well off to bear a greater share of this burden. Their greater responsibility should of course be recognized by a correspondingly enhanced role on the Council. Some proposals have been made in this regard which merit our close consideration. However, whatever we can agree upon by way of any change in the conditions of membership as they exist now, it must be made clear that privileges cannot be enjoyed without a premium being placed on them.

Finally, inasmuch as the principle of equity makes it difficult for us to accept the concept of permanent membership, we must oppose the power of veto which accompanies this privileged category. We must persevere in our efforts to restrain, modify and ultimately abolish the use of the veto so that more democratic decision-making can prevail in the Council. We support the concrete suggestions made in this regard by members of the Non-Aligned Movement and others, and urge that they be carefully studied with a view to adoption. Moreover, in the quest for the further democratization of the Council we shall seek to forge an even closer relationship between the Council and the General

Assembly, the most representative of our organs, and other relevant bodies such as the International Court of Justice. We welcome the steps that have already been taken to make the operations of the Council more effective and more transparent, and now urge their appropriate institutionalization.

As we now prepare to enter the next and hopefully decisive stage of the Working Group's deliberations, the CARICOM States, for which I have had the honour to speak today, undertake to cooperate fully and in good faith with the President, the Bureau and all Member States to fulfil the mandate of resolution 48/26. With its full and explicit provisions, that resolution should serve as the compass by which we continue to chart our future course. Accordingly, we should adhere as closely as possible to the directions which it gives so that we can bring our task to an early and satisfactory conclusion.

Mr. de Silva (Sri Lanka): While heeding calls for brevity I cannot neglect to express my delegation's thanks to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire for his guidance of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. Special thanks are due also to the two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their well documented observations on and assessments of the achievements of the Working Group, which are set out in document A/49/965.

Despite the complexity of issues involved, and the large number of States that have expressed their views on the Security Council, broad agreement is increasingly gathering around certain fundamentals. The need to make the Security Council more democratic in its operation, more representative in its composition, more transparent in its working methods and more effective in its eventual functioning has been accepted by all.

All this bears directly on the composition of the Security Council and the practical application of the principle of the sovereign equality of all States on whose behalf the Council is meant to act. That the Council needs to increase its current membership to better match increases in the number of Members now in the United Nations is obvious. A purely mathematical increase will not achieve much, unless the increase helps redress existing imbalances. The vast majority of States from Asia, Africa and Latin America are grossly underrepresented in the Council. Broad support appears to be growing towards a consensus on enlarging the Council to not more than 26 members. Sri Lanka strongly advocates that during the current session negotiations commence with a view to reaching agreement on such an increase as would ensure that each of the five regional groups have representation proportionate to its numbers rather than a flat one-fifth of the seats in the Council.

The question of permanent members has, for a number of reasons, been the most difficult to resolve, not least because of the vexed issue of the veto. Sri Lanka acknowledges the historical factors underlying Article 23.1 of the Charter. Beyond permanent membership in the Council, the States concerned have seats, in virtual perpetuity, in the Economic and Social Council, in the General Committee of the General Assembly, in the International Court of Justice and in other organs. Sri Lanka believes that in the current context other States, including some Non-Aligned States, can legitimately advance arguments at least as compelling as those advanced in 1945 to claim the special privilege of permanent membership. A sense of realism might perhaps dictate that the present permanent members remain undisturbed, however anachronistic the situation may seem. But any increase in this exalted category should not be to the further detriment of the developing countries.

Proposals have also been made for a new category of members — somewhat less privileged than permanent members, yet somewhat more privileged than the rest, the majority of States. This will only exacerbate matters, diminishing even further the role of the vast majority of States. Practical questions about choosing a new elite of 20 to 30 States would alone render the proposal a daunting one. Sri Lanka is, of course, ready to consider amending Article 23.2 of the Charter to permit re-election to the Security Council of any State which, through the endorsement of its regional group and the support of the general membership, can democratically earn the privilege of continuous terms in the Security Council.

The near-universal interest in revamping the Council comes from the fear of Member States being left out of decisions affecting their vital interests. The Security Council has in the recent past enlarged its area of operations in a significant way. Yet it has increased opportunities for the participation of non-members only in a marginal way. Nevertheless, we welcome these changes as a hopeful beginning. The report of the Working Group, in paragraphs 21 to 30, enumerates a

series of measures and practices which have taken account of agitation for a greater role in decision-making in the Security Council for Member States whose interests are directly concerned. A single example where greater involvement by Member States is vital is in respect of Security Council consultative mechanisms before and after sanctions have been imposed. In this regard, we welcome the proposal of the Secretary-General in his "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace". Sri Lanka also draws attention to the proposals relating to cluster II enumerated in the working paper of the Non-Aligned Group, included in document A/49/965.

Finally, Sri Lanka believes that the discussion of Security Council reform we have had over the past two years has not been in vain. We have covered much ground and hardly need to retrace our way. We need now to negotiate agreements on areas where broad understandings are evident; this is particularly so in respect of cluster II issues. On increases in the Council overall, we have similarly come far, when so many views concur on a figure of around 25. The question of permanent membership persists as a difficult one, and we need to concentrate on it. However, a lack of progress on difficult issues should not hold back agreement where possible, say on equitable increases in the category of non-permanent members. The mechanism of the Working Group has served us well, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen have been fair and impartial. The next stage, which would involve some negotiations, should continue to be equally open-ended and transparent, permitting all States equal opportunities to participate.

Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti): The twin questions of the enlargement of the Security Council and equitable representation, issues which date their formal emergence as far back as the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly, have reached a critical mass. There have been two years of detailed and extensive discussions in the Open-ended Working Group, established during the forty-eighth General Assembly. It is now fair to say that there is a universal consensus on the need to reform and enlarge the Security Council.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to arrive at an agreement on a reform package in time for the fiftieth anniversary, when such an announcement would have been apt, indeed fitting. Substantial differences in views and interests could not be overcome in a timely manner, despite the accumulation of an extensive body of suggestions, observations, facts and, above all, goodwill. What is needed now are concrete conclusions and recommendations embodied in a single negotiating text. As the informative and comprehensive letter to the President of the General Assembly by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group notes, the groundwork necessary for reform has been laid, and the momentum and energy of the fiftieth anniversary need to be maintained and seized during the current General Assembly session, if we are to avoid a continuance of the inequitable *status quo*. The task of the Working Group must now shift from an exploration of general approaches and views to a refinement of those views, and a follow-up with concrete proposals.

Membership of the United Nations has risen sharply since its founding 50 years ago, particularly from among developing countries. There have also been significant changes in the world's economy and its primary economic players. Neither of these trends have been adequately reflected in the Security Council — certainly not in its permanent membership. For these reasons, a valid case exists for both expanding the Security Council and improving its equitable representation. As it is, the five permanent members represent some 1.75 billion people, while nearly two-thirds of the world is left with no permanent representation. This ratio would not substantially change the existing imbalance if permanent seats were expanded merely by two and other deserving regions or countries were denied the status.

With the Council becoming more actively involved in international peace and security, the need to maintain and strengthen the sense of common purpose and objectives with the general membership, becomes even more critical. Without the active involvement and support of the majority of Members, and not simply a powerful few with global strategic interests, the Council risks diminished relevancy.

Reforming the Council's size, bringing about equitable representation and reforming its working methods were well addressed in the recommendations of the Non-Aligned Movement at its Summit Meetings in Jakarta in 1992 and in Cartagena last October. Statements from Non-Aligned Movement Summits have underscored the imbalance in the Council's permanent membership with regard to non-members and the urgent need to redress it. What is proposed is an expansion of the Council and the creation of additional categories of membership, permanent and non-permanent. There is a particular emphasis on the need for regional representation as a way to ensure that all regions of the world are properly represented.

The Non-Aligned Movement, however, recognizes the difficulty of reaching easy agreement on a reform that can be described as fair and far-reaching. It therefore proposes that expansion should be restricted for the time being to the non-permanent category. Several proposals have been presented to the Open-ended Working Group for restructuring non-permanent membership; they include having regional seats and reclassifying members into groups for designated seats.

One complicating issue in the expansion and reform of the Council is that of the current veto for permanent members. Its purpose no longer exists, and its continuance lacks real justification. Nevertheless, the likelihood of its demise is remote at present so strong consideration must be given to efforts to limit its use, such as requiring two simultaneous vetoes or restricting its use to security matters only. It would also be hardly fair that any new members should fail to enjoy all the rights of existing members, including the veto. That would mean that we would simply be creating a new form of second-class membership, which is certainly not the purpose of this whole exercise.

It is important to realize that at any given moment most States will not be seated on the Council. However, they must be able to remain informed of the Council's activities. Methods for increasing the Council's transparency of its reporting, meetings, consultations and briefings have been well-documented by the Working Group and provide a good basis for reform. The same may be said of a proposal for improving consultations between the Council and the General Assembly, particularly with regional groups, with troop-contributing countries and with other organs of the United Nations system.

Council reform may have reached the point where the gains to be had from further original exploration of the issues will be marginal. If so, we should begin the hard negotiations and consolidation necessary to produce a single negotiating text from the Open-ended Working Group. That would be a fitting achievement for the fiftieth session of the General Assembly to pursue with vigour.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The United States is pleased to participate in today's debate on agenda item 47, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters".

The progress of the Working Group has been slow but measurable. This year's progress report stated, *inter alia*, in its conclusions that there is

> "agreement to expand the Security Council and to review its working methods and other matters related to its functioning in a way that further strengthens its capacity and effectiveness, enhances its representative character and improves its working efficiency." (*A/49/47, para. 13*)

While important differences remain, the United States is committed to finding the proper overall package of changes to expand the Security Council. This is an important element in the overall reform process in which the United Nations is now engaged. We believe that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a further opportunity to make progress in this reform process.

In this endeavour we have benefited enormously from the role played by our vice co-Chair, the Ambassador of Thailand, whose fair and able leadership and constant engagement, together with that of his equally gifted colleague, the Ambassador of Finland, have helped promote the progress we have made these last 12 months. We look forward to working under the continued guidance of Ambassador Breitenstein and to cooperating with his new co-Vice-Chair. I should also mention in this regard that the United States will oppose any efforts to block the appropriate confirmation of the Bureau of any Working Group.

Strengthening of the Security Council through its careful enlargement is an extremely important step for the United Nations and for its role in global peace and security. The United States position has been consistent throughout this long discussion. We are open to expansion. We support an enlargement which would strengthen the capacity of the Council to shoulder the heavy tasks the global community now gives to it.

In particular, first, we enthusiastically endorse the candidacies of Japan and Germany for permanent membership. Their record of constructive global influence and their capacity to sustain heavy global responsibilities merit the very wide support their candidacies are now receiving. Indeed, the United States could not agree to a Council enlargement that did not result in their permanent membership.

Secondly, there should be no change in the status, powers and obligations of the current permanent members, all of which are countries with global political

and economic influence and a capacity to contribute to peace and security by concrete measures on a global basis.

Thirdly, we would support a modest number of additional seats beyond those for Japan and Germany. However, we believe the total size of the Council should not exceed 20.

Fourthly, the scope for the participation of developing countries in the Security Council must be enlarged. In this regard, we believe that the views of the regional groups, including especially the three largest — Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa — should guide the allocation of additional seats for countries in those regions.

We also remain committed to openness, transparency, responsiveness and dialogue between the Security Council and non-members, the issues contained in cluster II of the Working Group's mandate. As is well known, the Council has made important recent progress in these areas, in no small part because of the attention to this subject by the Working Group. But reform should be instructed by experience, not precede it. As we gain experience with recent reforms, we remain open to consideration of other improvements as the need suggests.

Finally, we welcome the interest that the President of the General Assembly has personally taken in the issue of Council expansion and reform, and we feel confident that the Working Group will benefit from his stewardship as its overall Chairman.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon): I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to Minister Essy and to the Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand, for their timely and systematic efforts in the tasks of the Open-ended Working Group, whose report is now before the Assembly. Thanks to their perseverance, progress had been made in pinpointing major subjects of discussion and debate. We hope, through our deliberations, to reach a just and even-handed solution to the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other related matters.

My delegation shares the opinion that the ongoing discussion on the reform of the Council in the framework of the Open-ended Working Group is essential. It has become clear that there is a need for an expanded Council. We support the approach of seeking an appropriate balance between the need to increase the size of the Council, because of the growth in United Nations membership and the change in the political realities since its inception, and the need for transparency and efficiency in its work. Furthermore, a simple enlargement of the Council by a few seats without appropriate changes in its working methods or procedures will not constitute a lasting solution to the reform question.

We cannot reiterate the arguments of 1945 and apply them to 1995. We are now living in different times. The Council will have to be democratized and restructured in a way that reflects the new realities of the world. At the Cartagena Conference, which represented the views of more than 100 countries, particular stress was laid on the need to democratize the United Nations in a way that reflects the universal vocation of the Organization in fulfilling the principle of the sovereign equality of States. The Security Council is not an international court of justice. It is essentially a political organ, and for this reason we should speed up its democratization process, in full awareness that any reform consecrating the status quo can only be relative.

This is why my delegation believes that the enhancement of the equitable representation and geographic distribution of the non-permanent member seats in the Council is indispensable if reform is to take place, and despite the fact that this would not fundamentally solve the problem of the disparity that will always exist between permanent and non-permanent members. This enhancement is necessary, but not sufficient, and if it is realized in the future, it will not solve the other problems facing us if no overall solution is found. Important differences still exist between States Members of the United Nations, and further in-depth consideration of these issues is essential if we are to reach an agreement.

Additionally, it is very important to bear in mind the direct or indirect consequences that the restructuring of the Security Council will have on the General Assembly. There should be a thorough review of the Council's relations with the General Assembly. We should be aware of this fact and approach the subject from a global perspective in order to achieve our ambitious goal of reform, focusing on ways and means to enhance the democratization process as a way to speed up the search for an acceptable solution to the question under consideration.

We would like to stress in this regard the necessity to study most carefully the several proposals and suggestions put forward by several delegations with a

view to strengthening the democratization process in the Security Council, among which is the so-called Italian proposal for rotation. Pragmatism and open-mindedness should help the work of the Group. However, we know that more deliberations are needed in order to reach an acceptable overall solution.

In closing, we would like to reiterate that democratic reform is our ultimate goal. Yet we have to be realistic in our approach so that we are not overwhelmed by our own rhetoric. We are dealing here with a political problem whose outcome will decide whether the reforms will be accomplished or not. We believe that the Open-ended Working Group has made progress, but unfortunately, not to the extent of achieving a breakthrough. Without a doubt, taboos which used to hamper our discussions have been seriously eroded, but not to the point of finding a solution acceptable to all. This is why we should persevere patiently in our discussions, which reflect the changes of recent decades and the need to act correspondingly.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me at the outset to pay tribute to Mr. Amara Essy, President of the General Assembly at its last session, for his wise guidance of the work of the Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, as well as other matters related to the Security Council.

I should also like to say how very grateful we are to Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand — whose departure we shall very much regret — for their patience and perseverance throughout this endeavour. We are confident that Mr. Breitenstein, with his experience and great skill, will continue to serve the Working Group until it has successfully concluded its work.

President Freitas do Amaral's decision to preside personally over the work of the Group reflects the interest of the international community as a whole in reforming a body that should respond to the exigencies of a world undergoing sweeping changes.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations affords us an opportunity to commit the Organization resolutely to a process of renewal and revitalization so that it will be able to respond to the new challenges it faces on the eve of the twenty-first century. The subject before us today constitutes a part of the reflection process that has begun on the reform of the Organization. On the agenda of the General Assembly since its thirty-fourth session, the issue did not really gain momentum until the creation in 1993 of a Working Group; the next year, its mandate was extended.

The report before us on the work of that Group emphasizes the richness of the debate on this question at the forty-ninth session when many proposals surfaced. It brings out the fact that agreement was reached on the need to increase the number of members of the Security Council and to take a fresh look at its working methods and other issues related to its functioning, in order to enhance its effectiveness and representativeness.

I wish to associate myself fully with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the non-aligned countries, and I should like to share some of my own thoughts with the Assembly.

Any reform of the Security Council should be guided by the principles of democratization, sovereign equality of countries and equitable geographic distribution.

It should involve a revision of the composition and size of the Security Council, as well as of its practices and working methods, two aspects that are complementary.

The revision of the composition and size of the Security Council, affecting permanent and non-permanent members alike, is imperative given the new global economic and political realities. In the light of these new realities, Japan and Germany are claiming — understandably so — a permanent seat. These same realities entitle the developing countries to their proper place in the Council, a place justified by the part they play in international affairs. This restructuring must be undertaken in a spirit of democratization and legitimization so as to correct the regional imbalance within that body.

Three regions are inadequately represented in the Security Council. In that light, Africa, which represents a third of the world's population and accounts for the majority of States Members of the Organization, should be granted two permanent seats. Those seats would be assigned on the basis of a system of rotation and according to criteria established by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council must be based solely on the criteria spelt out by the Charter, namely, contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, along with equitable geographic representation.

We stand convinced that the time has come to consider at least the regulation, if not the elimination, of the veto. If the veto is retained, it should be granted to the new permanent members. Regulating this power would consist of limiting its use. Its exercise could, for instance, be limited to decisions taken under Chapter VII of the Charter. A double veto would be required to block any decision.

Improving the Council's functioning and methods of work reflects a desire for effectiveness and transparency. The efforts made by the Security Council in this realm, as evidenced by the recent adoption of certain measures, should be pursued. The strengthening of cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly, whose role in the maintenance of international peace and security is recognized by the Charter, would ensure the full support of the States Members of the Organization for Security Council decisions. This applies also to cooperation with countries that are not members of the Security Council. The practice of holding consultations with troop-contributing countries should be expanded, in accordance with Article 50, to cover situations in which the Security Council orders economic sanctions against a State.

To be sure, some progress has been made. None the less, major differences remain as to substantive issues. For that reason, we support the Working Group's recommendation that its mandate should be renewed for the fiftieth session and that it should report to the General Assembly before the end of that session. While it may be unrealistic to set a deadline for completing the work in question, it is, however, possible to arrive, within a reasonably short time, at encouraging results. Now that the positions of most of the parties have been aired extensively, we should engage in genuine negotiations on contentious issues and, in a spirit of compromise and prompted by a desire for justice, fairness and realism, try to move the process forward in the desired direction.

The restructuring of the Security Council is one of the major focal points of the efforts to reform the Organization, a reform that must be based on the principles of democratization, representativeness and transparency.

Mr. Guardigli (San Marino) (*interpretation from French*): The delegation of the Republic of San Marino has actively participated in the work of the ad hoc group for the reform of the Security Council. We believe that this question is of crucial importance for all countries, in particular the smallest ones, whose independence and sovereignty are guaranteed by the Security Council.

The Republic of San Marino is a country where ancient and deeply rooted principles of freedom and democracy hold sway. We are therefore particularly sensitive to the need to ensure democratic principles, not only within each State but also within the international community, and in particular within the great family of the United Nations, to which we are proud to belong. Thus we are convinced that democracy should be one of the major principles of the process under way for the reform of the Security Council.

On the eve of a new millennium, we need a more democratic and more open Security Council, one that would be more sensitive to the requirements of all the States Members of the United Nations and more transparent in its methods of work.

During the three years that have elapsed since it joined the United Nations, the Republic of San Marino has always paid the closest of attention to the shared interests and needs of all the small States, and it believes that their voice must be heard in all forums, including the Security Council.

In this context, the Republic of San Marino hopes that a democratic formula for rotation within the Security Council will emerge so that all countries, including the smallest ones, are given a genuine opportunity to participate periodically in the work of the Security Council. Only in this manner will all countries be in a position to champion their own individual approaches to international problems, within an Organization that itself represents the highest guarantee of the defence of their vital interests.

This is why the Republic of San Marino would like to support the Italian proposal, which, in its view, represents a good starting point for further in-depth study of the issue.

Mr. Biegman (Netherlands): Let me first express my sincere appreciation for the efficient, constructive and impartial leadership shown by the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassadors

Breitenstein and Pibulsonggram. I am sad that Ambassador Pibulsonggram will soon leave us, but I very much hope that Ambassador Breitenstein will be willing to stay on.

With regard to the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, I feel that we have come to a point where the general exchange of views has very nearly been exhausted. An in-depth discussion of more concrete reform proposals will have to be the next stage in the process. To find a consensus, compromises will no doubt have to be made. This will not be possible without sacrificing certain national interests for the sake of the overall and global interest of enabling the United Nations to be prepared for the challenges of the future.

The Netherlands, for its part, remains willing to consider any formula that will reconcile efficiency and representativity. We are still of the opinion that Germany and Japan, second and third contributors to our cash-starved Organization, deserve a permanent seat. We also feel that a modus has to be found to ensure the proper representation on the Security Council of Asia, Africa and Latin America. I hope that during the fiftieth session creative thinking will make some progress possible in this difficult terrain.

Still, my delegation is not over-optimistic that agreement on the expansion of the Council will be reached soon. We do not see, however, why progress in cluster II should have to wait because of a lack of consensus on cluster I. I will therefore focus my intervention today on the transparency and working methods of the Council. Important changes in this field are desirable and can be made without changing the United Nations Charter.

There is general agreement that the role of the Security Council gained considerable importance after the end of the cold war. At the same time, we saw that the acceptability and credibility of the Council's decisions were increasingly subject to criticism, not only by public opinion but also by Members of the United Nations itself. One of the lessons to be learned from recent experience is that mandates of the Security Council for peace-keeping operations must be realistic and feasible. Calamities such as occurred in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate that the operational aspects of the Council's resolutions need a solid foundation in military planning and available capabilities. At the same time, it is important that there be sufficient political will to use those capabilities when needed. Therefore, in the future, no mandates should be given before the means and the readiness for implementation are assured.

At the same time, it has become clear that the Council can no longer operate behind closed doors, as an exclusive club. Trust and confidence in the decision-making process of the Council require a maximum of openness, transparency and coordination between the Council and the non-members. If these qualities are lacking, decision-making loses weight and value. The Council can carry out its crucial task effectively only if the entire membership of the United Nations feels committed to supporting and executing consistently the decisions of the Council. In order to realize this aim, the Security Council should be made more responsive to the views of the United Nations membership at large.

My country has been an active troop contributor in many peace-keeping operations. Our commitment to contributing troops to operations mandated by the Security Council is unchanged, but there is discomfort with the fact that the influence of most troop-contributing countries on the decision-making process in the Council remains marginal. Article 44 of the Charter sets out the important principle that the Security Council

> "shall, before calling upon a Member not represented on it to provide armed forces in fulfilment of the obligations assumed under Article 43, invite that Member, if the Member so desires, to participate in the decisions of the Security Council concerning the employment of contingents of that Member's armed forces."

I know that Article 43 has never been implemented; neither has Article 44. Nevertheless, there is no doubt about the spirit of the Charter and the intention of its drafters. Troop-contributing countries are entitled to be involved in the decision-making process in the Council when it can affect their troops on the ground.

The present situation is hardly in accordance with this. We have seen that the effect of changes in the mandate of a peace-keeping operation can have grave consequences for United Nations troops on the ground. But troop-contributing countries have no say if the Council decides on such a change of mandate. This amounts to a kind of taxation without representation, and can be detrimental to the political commitment of actual and potential troop contributors.

On 8 March 1995, before the Open-Ended Working Group, I suggested a number of measures that could lead to an improvement in the transparency and working methods of the Council: first, institutionalizing the existing practice of regular consultations between the presidency of the Council and the general membership; secondly, institutionalizing the existing practice of conducting regular consultations between the presidency of the Council and Member States on the Council's programme of work, and giving these briefings the maximum substance possible; thirdly, implementing the intention mentioned in the statement of 16 December 1994 of the Security Council itself to hold more open meetings of the Council, and, especially, implementing the suggestion by the Council in that statement for the holding of what was called "orientation debates"; fourthly, enhancing the process of consultations between the Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries on current peace-keeping operations, including consultation at an early stage on issues such as the content, duration, and change in or termination of a mandate — we call for the formalization of meaningful discussions on all aspects of peace operations between the Council and troop contributors and are prepared to participate actively in endeavours aimed at the establishment of workable mechanisms in this regard; fifthly, making available to the general membership, to the extent possible, information provided by the Secretariat to the Council; and sixthly, and lastly, improving the quality of the annual report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and including therein an evaluation of the Council's activities over the last year — more analysis, evaluation and reflection on lessons learned would enhance the value of this report, which so far, has been no more than a factual summing up of the activities of the Council during the last year; this would also lead to a meaningful discussion of the report in the General Assembly.

If I repeat these points here today — and I am sorry if I have been a bit long — it is because relatively little progress has been made since 8 March 1995. For example, the promising idea of holding those "orientation debates" mentioned in the statement of the Council of 16 December 1994 has not been translated into established practice. I would therefore like to use this opportunity to call for revitalized attention to the need to improve the transparency of the Council's working methods.

Members can count on the continuing cooperation of my delegation in the search for lasting, equitable and fair solutions which strengthen the Security Council in carrying out its important and challenging task in an ever more complex world. In the consideration of this agenda item, my country will continue to be guided by the desire to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and credibility of the Security Council's work. Increasing the Council's transparency seems to be one area where progress could be made in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Our discussion of this important item comes on the heels of another phase of intensive discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. The report that the Working Group submitted to the General Assembly at its last session contains useful information although it included no recommendations on the substantive issues that were discussed.

Today, at the beginning of a new attempt to reach a successful conclusion on the question of an increase in the membership of the Council and of Council reform, my country's delegation wishes to extend its thanks to Mr. Amara Essy, Chairman of the Working Group at the last session of the General Assembly, and to the two Vice-Chairmen, the representatives of Thailand and of Finland, for the skill with which they conducted the affairs of the Group, and especially for their honest assessment — contained in document A/49/965 — of the Group's activities last year.

The representative of Colombia spoke on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement. My delegation fully supports his statement, which honestly reflects the position of the Non-Aligned Movement — as stated, initially, at the Jakarta summit and at the subsequent ministerial conferences, and as recently confirmed at the eleventh summit, in Cartagena.

As delegations may know, the views of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya on this item have been detailed at previous sessions of the General Assembly and at meetings of the Open-ended Working Group. However, in view of the importance of the question under discussion, we feel it is necessary to underscore once again the points previously made by our delegation.

Many proposals on the question of increasing the membership of the Security Council have been put forward. My delegation supports any increase proportionate to the large increase in the membership of the United Nations. In this respect, the Non-Aligned Movement has put forward a constructive proposal, which we believe should be taken into consideration.

From our point of view, equitable geographical distribution in the composition of the Security Council should be given the same priority. The current situation over-represents certain regions, while some other regions are under-represented. This runs counter to the provisions of the Charter, specifically those of article 23 thereof.

With regard to the question of membership categories, my delegation believes that the number of non-permanent members should be increased but does not think that there is any need for new permanent members — something that would simply perpetuate the discrimination between Members of the United Nations. If, however, it were decided that there was a real need to increase the number of permanent members, this should not be predetermined on the pretext of easing the financial burdens on permanent members.

The principle of equitable geographical distribution should also be applied in the selection of members in this category. In addition, special consideration should be given to regions that are under-represented, or are not represented at all, in the category, as in the case of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. We believe that new permanent members should be selected not on the basis of who is bigger or stronger but on the basis of regional perspective, in accordance with procedures to be agreed upon in each region.

Increasing membership of the Security Council is a requirement that is made imperative by several factors, especially by the fact that membership of the United Nations has increased dramatically since the last expansion of the Council. In addition, my delegation wishes to confirm once again its conviction that mere change in the Council's composition will not be sufficient unless such change is accompanied by drastic changes in the Council's methods of work. As is well known, several proposals along these lines have been put forward. Some of them have been put into effect by the Council, while others have not.

Let me put some of the many questions that have thus been raised. How long should Members of the United Nations wait for the Security Council to put into effect one of their demands — namely, that the Council hold more formal meetings and, thereby, allow all Member States to express their views and explain their positions on the issues under consideration? Till when will the decision-making process in the Council remain constricted in a manner that gives the impression that one single State or a few permanent members control decision-making? Why does the Council limit its consultations to countries that contribute troops to peace-keeping operations, without listening to the views of other countries concerned with matters under consideration in the Council? Lastly, when will certain members of the Council stop ignoring the positions of a number of other members, as has happened on several occasions, especially during periodic reviews of the sanctions regimes?

My delegation is fully confident that many other delegations, including those of countries that are members of the Security Council, are asking the self-same questions that we have raised. Some of those delegations have actually asked those questions, even if they did so in different language. In our estimation, the Security Council could best respond by putting into effect the proposed improvements. The problem is that certain members of the Council do not want any reform. They want simply to retain the considerable clout they now have.

Notwithstanding, we remain hopeful that the will of the majority will prevail and will lead to the adoption of measures that would enable the Council to work in a democratic and transparent fashion and ensure that it establishes sound relations with other organs of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly. The Council should be accountable to the Assembly as the sole body where all Member States enjoy full equality.

With regard to the reform process, my delegation deems it essential for the Security Council to be neutral, to steer clear of policies based on double standards and to remember at all times that, it works on behalf of all Members of the United Nations and is not their guardian. The Council should perform its duties in accordance with the Charter. It should never encroach on the functions of other bodies, such as the International Court of Justice.

Members of the Security Council should be vigilant and should ensure that no country is allowed to impose its wishes on the Council. It should be made impossible for any country to use the Council to serve its own purposes and to implement its designs, as happened in the past when certain countries managed to use the Council as a tool to punish a number of countries, especially small nations, by imposing sanctions on them, before exhausting peaceful measures, as provided for in the United Nations Charter.

My country has opposed the veto power. In fact, Libya was the first to call for the abolition of this

privilege because it is convinced that the circumstances in which it was granted no longer exist and that there is therefore no justification for its continuance.

We were told and continue to be told that the veto power was granted to certain countries with greater responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security. Here we should like to ask: Is not the continued colonization of peoples a factor that threatens international peace? The answer is clear. If such is the case, it is a contradiction in terms to give the veto privilege to countries that continue to colonize other peoples, as in Guam, the Virgin Islands, the Malvinas Islands, Gibraltar, New Caledonia, Réunion and Mayotte.

We are told also that shouldering a greater financial burden in the work of the United Nations is a criterion for permanent membership. Here, we should like to ask how could such a criterion apply to a country whose arrears in the United Nations budget, including the costs of peace-keeping operations, now exceed one billion dollars?

Is it not also an injustice that the veto power should continue to be valid even when it is used to consecrate acts of aggression, as happened 10 years ago, when it was used by a country that enjoys the privilege in trying to avoid condemnation for a treacherous military, air and naval attack against my country in the course of which hundreds of innocent people were killed and injured? Later, it was discovered that the pretext which was used to justify the attack had no foundation in actual fact. Presently, that same country is actively rejecting any solution for what has come to be known as the Lockerbie incident. In so doing, it depends on its veto power which it threatens to use against any endeavour to lift the sanctions it pushed the Security Council to impose on my country under fabricated arguments and on the force of false accusations.

The fact is that the victors of 1945 granted themselves special privileges. But the United Nations today is not what it was five decades ago. The most important aspect of the change that has taken place is the fact that most of the countries that are now represented in this Assembly were not Members of the Organization at the time and did not have any say in granting any of the privileges that were granted to five countries. All of this leads us to one conclusion: the veto power must be abolished.

In addition to the many valid justifications put forward in support of this view there are other good grounds for abolishing the privilege, including the fact that the veto power runs counter to justice and to the noble principles of the Charter, the first principle of which is the full sovereign equality of States. It also contradicts the values and undermines the principles of democracy. Moreover, it is no longer acceptable that certain countries should enjoy a privilege which they abuse in order to perpetuate their hegemony over the fate of the world, to eternalize their hold over the process of international decision-making and to eternalize a prerogative that calls to mind the divine right kings arrogated to themselves in the Middle Ages.

Shortly, the Open-ended Working Group will be carrying out its work under the wise leadership of the President of the General Assembly, with the capable assistance of his two Vice-Presidents. We hope that the views put forward by Member States at this session and during the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations will give new impetus to the work of the Working Group and make it able to quickly and successfully to accomplish its task.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, it gives me great pleasure to convey to the President of the General Assembly the special appreciation of the delegation of Egypt for the effective manner in which he has been conducting the work of the Assembly since the beginning of the fiftieth session. He has demonstrated the outstanding leadership and diplomatic skills of which we are all aware. It also gives me great pleasure sincerely to thank the two Vice-Presidents, who have carried out their tasks with great competence.

During the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters was characterized by objectivity and intellectual depth. Its deliberations have entered a new phase which transcends the delivery of abstract and generalized laudatory statements to the expression of concrete ideas. This has led to an important clarification of the major issues involved, even if it has not yet led to actual negotiation on a definitive text that would serve as a basis for amending the Charter.

If we look at the current balance sheet, we find that while the need to discuss these matters was itself put into question at the first session of the Working Group, agreement now exists on the need for an increase in the membership of the Council and for reviewing its methods of work and the procedures it follows in carrying out its

functions. The discussion has also highlighted a number of principles that could serve as guidelines in the pursuit of equitable representation and increase in the Council's membership. These principles include equal sovereignty among States, equitable geographical representation and the extent of participation in the maintenance of international peace and security. There is also a clearly perceived need for any change to include enhanced transparency, efficacy and democracy in the Council's work.

The two clusters prepared by the two Chairmen of the Working Group on the most important issues to be discussed have been instrumental in focusing discussion on the most important issues and have afforded the opportunity of studying them in-depth at the level of States and of regional groups. In this regard, Egypt, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, has presented a paper that defined the general framework of the States members of the Movement and clearly outlined their position on many of the issues relating to increasing the Council's membership and developing its performance.

I wish to state that Egypt supports the statement of the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, since our position is based on the following:

First, any increase in the Council's membership must be based on the principles of equitable geographical distribution and sovereign equality among States, with a view to imbuing the work of the Council with greater legitimacy and credibility. Secondly, there is a need to address the imbalance caused by the under-representation of the Non-Aligned Movement in the Security Council. Thirdly, it is important to undertake a periodic review of the questions agreed upon. Fourthly, there is a need to review the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly, the general membership of the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, with a view to enhancing the transparency of the Council's work and the participation of non-member States in decision-making. Fifthly, the Working Group must address in a parallel and interconnected manner the questions of increase in membership and development of the Council's work and accord them the same degree of attention.

The increase in the membership of the Security Council should not lead to an increase in the number of permanent seats for developed States at the expense of the developing countries. What is needed now is creating the desired balance in the Council's composition.

This will be achieved only through the addition of a number of developing States whose ability to shoulder their new responsibilities has been demonstrated through the contributions they have made and the role they have played at the regional and international levels.

As my Foreign Minister said earlier this session, Egypt's role, *inter alia* in the Arab, African, Middle Eastern and non-aligned frameworks, and its continued international contribution in support of United Nations activities, qualify it to shoulder its responsibilities in a new Security Council with an increased membership and balanced representation of all regions.

We turn next to the optimal method for agreeing on criteria for increasing the Council's membership. The delegation of Egypt considers that this requires us to be absolutely realistic so that we may accurately reflect the realities of our contemporary world. There are certain States that perform an active international role and there are others that bear a burden of regional responsibilities which varies from one region to the other. At the same time, due account must be taken of the principle of sovereign equality to ensure that there are equal opportunities to attain membership of a new Security Council in a democratic framework.

In the light of the foregoing, the delegation of Egypt considers that applying the criterion of realism requires discussion of the views concerning the addition of a number of seats to be rotated among a certain number of States from each region. Such ideas afford a larger number of Member States the opportunity of sharing the responsibilities of Council membership in rotation, in every region and thereby consolidate the Council's role and reaffirm its credibility.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the creation of additional permanent seats in the Council runs into two obstacles that are not easily surmountable. The first relates to the negative effects on the work of the Council that would result from increasing the number of Members with the right of veto; a subject I shall return to presently. The second concerns the many difficulties that stand in the way of reaching agreement on third-world States that would be given permanent seats in the Council, especially in view of the diversity of situations, characteristics and political circumstances in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In view of all this, it would be more to the point, both in terms of logic and in practical terms, to focus, in

the next phase, on exploring the range of ideas submitted by certain States, such as Italy and Australia, on developing a new method for selecting certain States on the basis of their regional weight and on giving them special responsibilities, with a view to developing further such ideas and building on them so that they may accurately reflect contemporary realities.

With respect to the working methods of the Security Council, my delegation affirms that this process should include a review of the Council's decision-making process. Experience has shown that there is a growing need to broaden the base of consultation between the Council and the concerned States in the region where the events take place. The Charter calls upon the Council to undertake consultations with States non-members of the Council in two specific situations: under Article 44, if the non-member is a contributor of troops to a peace-keeping operation authorized by the Council, as mentioned today by the representative of the Netherlands; and under Article 50, if a State finds itself confronted with special economic problems arising from measures taken by the Security Council under Chapter VII.

My delegation finds it important that the scope of the consultations the Council is supposed to conduct with States non-members should not be limited to the events themselves, but should be extended to the phase preceding the adoption of a resolution and to include regional organizations. Moreover, consultations should continue after the adoption of the resolution, especially if it involves the deployment of United Nations forces for peace-keeping or peace-building.

It is not possible to speak of measures to develop the Security Council without touching on the Council's voting system, a system that has yet to reach completion owing to the fact that it has not been possible to agree on clear criteria for distinguishing the substantive from the procedural in matters that are put to the Council. The delegation of Egypt considers that, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the Council, it is necessary that the scope and limits of the veto power should be defined, either by amending the Charter or by updating the provisional rules of procedure of the Council and making them permanent.

In that connection, the firm position of the Non-Aligned Movement is that the right of veto must be reviewed, a position that Egypt has held since the San Francisco Conference. Members know that the provisions of Article 27 of the Charter differentiate between procedural and all other matters without stating clearly what is meant by each term. The five permanent members have tried to impose their own exhaustive interpretation, set out at the San Francisco Conference in a document of 7 June 1945, known as the "San Francisco Statement". However, the Conference did not endorse that document, and all attempts to include its content in the Council's first rules of procedure have failed. Continued disagreement on the matters that should or should not fall within the scope of the veto had the result of making the Council's rules of procedure "provisional", to this day.

We are all aware of the adverse effects on the work and the credibility of the Council of the abuse of the veto power in an earlier period. We also know that the right of veto continues to be used covertly: the veto is threatened with a view to changing the contents of some draft resolutions.

In the light of the foregoing, the delegation of Egypt considers it necessary to stress a number of points:

First, there is no definite, agreed and unambiguous legal definition of the matters to which the veto applies. Adherence to the San Francisco Statement in this respect opens the door to the unrestricted use of the veto, as the Statement was based on the concept of the "chain of events", by which the scope of applicability of the veto can be expanded infinitely.

Secondly, analysis of the Council's practice in distinguishing the substantive from the procedural in the issues it deals with shows that in many cases the Council has defined such matters on the basis of the provisions of the San Francisco Statement, even though the Statement lacks any legal basis, not having been adopted by the San Francisco Conference and not having been incorporated into the provisional rules of procedure. In addition, those provisions run counter to sound logic and lack in clarity, which can only lead to arbitrary interpretations of the provisions of the Charter. So long as the definition of the scope of the veto remains unclear, it will be unacceptable to grant such broad undefined powers to any other member.

The work of the Working Group during the previous session has underscored a number of basic ideas, without which it would have been difficult to complete the negotiations. I find it important, before concluding my statement, to commend once again the continued constructive efforts made by the two Vice-Chairmen, the

ambassadors of Finland and Thailand. My delegation will continue its contribution and cooperation with them, and with the other delegations within the Working Group to achieve further progress on this significant and vital question, during the current session.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): From the very start, I wish to state that my delegation fully supports the statement earlier made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement relative to this very important item on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. My delegation would also like to commend the Co-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group for the able manner in which the deliberations in that Group have been conducted over the last two years.

When the General Assembly decided to appoint the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation On and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, it was with a view to redressing the imbalances in the current membership of the Security Council and taking into account the representations from the overwhelming majority of the United Nations membership.

Since the commencement of deliberations on these important matters, some reforms in the working methods of the Security Council have occurred. My delegation welcomes the now regular consultations between the Council and troop contributors. We also welcome the briefings by the President of the Security Council of the membership of the United Nations at large. These initiatives, although only tentative, are nevertheless going some way towards the ultimate objective of ensuring that the Security Council is transparent, democratic and accountable.

However, as regards the main reform — namely, the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council — a lot of work remains to be done. Indeed, very little, if anything, has been achieved, as evidenced by the report of the Open-ended Working Group.

It is agreed that the Security Council is in need of expansion to reflect the rise and diversity in the membership of the United Nations. The general membership of the United Nations has grown from 51 members in 1945 to 185 today. For this reason, the legitimacy of the Security Council's speaking and acting on behalf of the whole membership will remain a sham unless fundamental change occurs to guarantee equitable and fair representation on the Security Council in line with present-day realities in the world.

My delegation is of the view that there is a need to accelerate the reform process, lest we lose the momentum. Let us not be parochial in our approach to these reforms. The Security Council reforms needed to prepare the United Nations to face the challenges of the twenty-first century must be broad-based, bold and not piecemeal, based on the principles of democracy, the sovereign equality of States, and the equitable and geographical distribution of seats. These fundamental principles are enshrined in the Charter and must serve as a basic reference point for reforming the Security Council.

As my President said when addressing the United Nations fiftieth anniversary Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on 22 October 1995:

> "The Security Council especially ... can no longer be maintained as a sanctuary of the holy of holies, with only the original members acting as high priests and deciding on issues for the rest of the world, which cannot be admitted. Broader and geographical representation is the answer." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 35th Meeting, p. 11)*

When we consider either the permanent seats or the non-permanent seats on the Security Council, due regard should be paid to redressing the imbalances in the current membership of the Security Council. The reforms should be in the spirit of genuinely representative democracy and good governance, which the United Nations embodies and personifies. My delegation also believes that those who urge democratization at the national level should, in fact, be in the forefront of the efforts to democratize international institutions, including democratic reform of the Security Council itself.

In the current composition of the Security Council, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are not adequately represented. It is the view of my delegation that any reform of the Council must therefore redress this imbalance.

My delegation is willing to work with all the delegations genuinely working for Security Council reforms. Let us not procrastinate — the United Nations

and the Security Council, in particular, need the reforms. Let us galvanize our political will for reform now.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): Before I make my statement on this subject, allow me to present this quotation:

> "According to the Holy Book, it is said: Those who labour to build the house labour in vain if God is not part of the exercise."

We are here today, bringing all our efforts together to restructure the Security Council. But I have these questions: How many times do we ever invite God to come and intervene in the problems that beset the United Nations? Are we not yet aware that if problems are plaguing the United Nations it is because we have forsaken God? For instance, we hardly pray in this plenary Hall. We hardly invite God into this plenary Hall. Do we think we are wise enough to solve our own problems? This is a message to you, Sir — share it with all the authorities of the United Nations.

I am once again honoured to address the General Assembly for and on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland. I wish to add the voice of my country to the already swelling chorus of views stated by other Member States on the crucial question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters. Needless to say, my delegation attaches significance to this item.

Reeling from the shock of the Second World War, with its unparalleled suffering to mankind, the founding fathers of the United Nations Charter established the Security Council as one of the principal organs of the United Nations. It was charged with the awesome duty of maintaining peace and international security and ensuring that the events leading to, and the happenings of, the Second World War do not recur.

Many significant changes have taken place since the formation of the Security Council, most notably the increase in the membership of the United Nations and the end of the cold war. The question that arises in the light of these and other changes is: can we maintain the status quo in the Security Council and at the same time ensure that it reflects contemporary realities?

My answer is in the negative. There is an obvious need to review the structure, composition and functioning of the Council in order to enable it to carry out the work and the duties of the times in which we live and which we can see unfolding into the twenty-first century.

I shall now venture to identify issues which constitute areas of major concern to my delegation.

The first is permanency in the Security Council. My delegation is of the view that permanent membership of the Security Council needs serious revisitation. We are the first to recognize the importance of, and the idea behind, permanent membership of the Security Council at the time it was created. It would appear, however, that the motivation behind permanent membership has been overtaken by recent events, and certain questions naturally come to mind. Is permanent membership a necessary feature of the Security Council today? If the answer is in the affirmative, is there not a need to review the criteria for permanent candidature *vis-à-vis* the principle of equality of States as enshrined in the Charter? Is it justifiable to maintain the present membership in the Security Council in the light of the fact that some members of the permanent five do not maintain a distinguished record on contributions to the work of the United Nations, including contributions to voluntary funds and programmes?

I now turn to use of the power of the veto. This issue is inextricably linked with the previous one. In the light of changing international circumstances, the Swaziland delegation is of the firm view that the veto has since become anachronistic and should be abolished, since it reduces the principle of equality of States and elementary principles of democracy to a mere shibboleth.

As regards an increase in membership of the Security Council, my delegation is of the considered view that the present quota of members is sufficient to carry out the functions of the Council effectively. There is therefore no need to interfere with the number of members, remembering the adage "Too many cooks spoil the broth".

On the question of equitable geographic representation, without prejudice to our position on the need to maintain permanent membership in the Security Council as already stated, we support the view that the principle of equitable geographic representation must be strictly observed in both categories of membership in the Security Council. This will, in our opinion, enhance the credibility of the Security Council, and will make it more representative and democratic.

On the subject of accountability, the Swaziland delegation notes with concern that there is a relative paucity of communication between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This results in the General Assembly being unaware of the activities of the Security Council, even in matters in which there is no urgency to justify prompt action by the Security Council.

We therefore appeal to the General Assembly to devise ways and means to ensure that the Council reports fully and promptly as required by Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter. Such measures will promote transparency in the work of the Security Council.

Last but not least, I would like to make an appeal to Member States: it is our collective responsibility to fashion the entire United Nations system in a manner that will reflect the noble ideals of the founding fathers and at the same time take full account of the ever-changing circumstances and realities of our world today. Some people set goals and others achieve those goals. Let us move forward and interpret the ideals of the founding fathers so that they become a reality.

In conclusion, I have listened to all the preceding speakers but none has mentioned representation of my continent — Africa — in the Security Council. Is it not yet another step and attitude to marginalize Africa? If the argument is that Africa is a poor continent I repeat that there are members of the Security Council today that are poor, but they are permanent and they are there. They can hardly contribute to peace-keeping, let alone to the developing nations, including my continent, Africa. I therefore strongly argue, and we should let it dawn in our minds, that the time has come to realize that Africa should have a permanent member in the Security Council, whether or not Africa is poor. We were created by God and no one should marginalize us.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): The fact that nearly one third of the membership of the United Nations has decided to participate in the discussion on this agenda item speaks for itself. There is probably no issue more important and vital for our Organization and for its Member States than the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". The effective and efficient reform of the United Nations and its revitalization seem impossible without adequate changes which reflect present-day realities in the composition and activities of one of the Organization's principal organs, the Security Council.

But today I am speaking to the Assembly with mixed feelings. On the one hand, the Heads of State and Government voiced their almost unanimous support for the expansion of the Security Council, seeing this as an essential prerequisite for making the Council more democratic, more representative, more transparent and more accountable to the General Assembly. The delegation of Ukraine completely shares the idea, reflected in the Declaration on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations, that

> "The Security Council should, *inter alia*, be expanded and its working methods continue to be reviewed in a way that will further strengthen its capacity and effectiveness, enhance its representative character and improve its working efficiency and transparency". *(A/50/48, para. 14)*

On the other hand, we have to admit that two years of intensive diplomatic consultations did not bring us closer to the resolution of this rather important issue. Moreover, the positions of some Member States became even more polarized. To our regret, we cannot but agree with the conclusion drawn in the report of the Working Group to the General Assembly that "important differences continue to exist on key issues". (A/49/47, para. 16) The delegation of Ukraine hopes that the political will that has been so explicitly voiced by the world's leaders in favour of the reform of the Security Council will finally meld into decisive political actions in this direction.

Ukraine shares the current opinion of the absolute majority of Member States that at present the quantitative composition of the Security Council, its functions and its working methods should be appropriately changed. This is connected with the necessity to enhance representation in the Security Council of new regional realities, in particular, the emergence of new States in the international arena.

Ukraine favours an increase in the composition of the Security Council of up to at least 25 members, which would incorporate the interests of all the regional groups and correspond to the principle of equitable geographic distribution. The delegation of Ukraine firmly believes that additional seats in the Security Council should be provided for all the regional groups. I wish to stress that Ukraine will not support any variant of the reform of the Security Council that does not provide for additional seats for the Group of Eastern European States. At present, that regional Group, despite having almost doubled in

size to 20 States, has only one non-permanent seat. Thus, excluding Russia, 19 States of the Group theoretically have a chance to be elected to occupy this seat in the Council once every 35 years.

In our opinion, any change in the composition of the Security Council should take into account the contributions of individual States to United Nations activities in the maintenance of international peace and security, their participation in United Nations humanitarian-assistance activities and their support for peace-keeping operations. In this light, Ukraine would like to see Germany and Japan permanently present in the Security Council.

On the basis of the same criteria for expansion, the proposal of the delegation of Italy, which has been supported by quite a large group of States, looks very attractive. We are prepared to cooperate in the search for a comprehensive solution to this extremely important issue.

The delegation of Ukraine believes that the creation of eight non-permanent seats, each of which would rotate between three States, making a total of 24 States, would make it possible for the countries which make considerable contributions to United Nations peace-keeping activities and the financing of the Organization and which represent the majority of the world's population to take on the great responsibility of being engaged in the peacemaking activities of the international community.

At the same time, those eight members would not be eligible to occupy the 10 seats allocated at present to the non-permanent Security Council members. In our opinion, this would give small Member States an opportunity to be elected to the Council more often.

Naturally, the exact criteria and mechanism for selecting those 24 States should be negotiated by the Member States and adopted by the General Assembly.

Ukraine is of the opinion that the issue of certain modifications of the veto right and its gradual elimination should be studied. The elimination of the ideological rivalry between the East and the West and the establishment of partnership relations between the permanent members of the Security Council make the institution of the veto historically obsolete and politically unjustified. Its existence only seduces the permanent members of the Security Council into sometimes using this organ in their narrow national interests, to the detriment of the interests of the international community as a whole.

It is the Ukrainian delegation's firm conviction that the issues of cluster II should not be held hostage to the principal problem of the expansion of the Security Council. Many steps have been made towards democratization and transparency in the Council's methods of work. The most important among them are the introduction of the regular briefings of the Presidency by the Security Council, which should be formally institutionalized in the rules of procedure, and the organization of meetings between the members of the Security Council and troop-contributing States.

At the same time, in our opinion, Member States should urge that members of the Security Council to undertake the following steps: enhance information coverage for non-members on the activity of the Council; enhance availability to non-members of the Council of all documents being discussed by the Council; organize on a regular basis open, formal Security Council consultations at an early stage of the discussion of an issue; and publish thematically selected monthly reviews containing briefings on the positions of each Security Council member State on individual issues discussed by the Council during the month.

The reform of the Security Council is long overdue. The Member States should finally take on this burden of responsibility of historic dimensions and start reforming the United Nations. Let me remind members of the words of one of the most outstanding Presidents of the United States of America, Thomas Jefferson, which are inscribed on the memorial to him in Washington:

> "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But, as circumstances change, institutions must also advance to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man still to wear the coat which fitted him when a boy as require civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

Mr. Kittikhoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic) (*interpretation from French*): After more than two years of lengthy, not to say marathon, discussions in the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, we have today arrived at an important stage. Indeed, we must take stock of the situation and, on the basis of that assessment, give serious thought to charting our future course, with a view

to attaining the ultimate common objective towards which we are striving.

The issue before us, of course, is neither simple nor easy. On the contrary, it is complex, difficult and multifaceted, requiring serious consideration by us all. But, strictly speaking, "difficult" and "complex" do not mean "insoluble". If we are resolute in our common political will, our views and opinions, which are still divergent on several points, can be in due course reasonably reconciled. We are saying, loud and clear, that we want to reform the Security Council and to make it a more transparent and effective body. That is the crux of the matter; indeed, it is our ambitious common goal. United in the quest to achieve that goal, and in close consultation with one another, we should thus exert the utmost effort, using all the means at our disposal, with a view to the earliest possible attainment of our shared objective.

The position of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is well known. We have declared our stance on numerous occasions, both here in the plenary General Assembly, and at the level of the Open-ended Working Group.

We continue to believe that there is good reason to enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council by expanding its membership, and in particular the representation of the developing countries, in order better to reflect the new global political realities. As for the composition of the Council, like many delegations, we too wish to see an increase in the number of permanent and non-permanent members. In our view, increasing the number of permanent members — including both developed and developing countries — would strengthen the United Nations and its legitimacy, because it would then better reflect the new international political configuration. As to the criteria for selection, we note the observations that have been made and take the view that this issue deserves more in-depth examination.

Just as important is increasing the number of non-permanent members. In our view, this increase, in accordance with paragraph 1 of Article 24 of the Charter, would enhance the Council's legitimacy. Better yet, it would give more States a seat on the Council and enable them to participate in its work, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

The question of the right of veto is one of the most important questions we must discuss. Most delegations are of the view that the right of veto is anachronistic, anti-democratic and contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States. This is an important point of view which merits serious consideration. However, the Lao People's Democratic Republic is prepared to join any consensus that might emerge in the consideration of this most delicate issue.

We welcome the measures already taken by the Security Council to enhance the effectiveness of its relations with the States Members of the Organization as a whole and to improve its practices and working methods. These include, among other things, the daily or twice-weekly information briefings held by the President of the Council for non-members of the Council; the meetings between the members of the Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat; the Council President's consultations with concerned countries on matters being considered by the Council; the more frequent holding of open Council meetings, especially when an issue is first being considered; the issuance for non-members of provisional texts, printed in blue, of Council draft resolutions at the same time as they are distributed to members of the Council; and measures designed to improve the transparency of procedures in sanctions committees. These measures and practices are the first fruit of our joint efforts, and we fervently hope that they will be institutionalized in order to guarantee their systematic application by the Council.

Having said this, there is, quite frankly, still much to be done. By way of example, we would like to draw attention to the question of the relationship between the Security Council and the Members of the United Nations that are not members of the Council. We feel that the Council must inform and consult with countries that are affected by its decisions. Furthermore, it would be appropriate for the Council to grant those countries the right to state their position publicly to the Council before it begins informal consultations and the right to attend informal consultations of the whole as observers. This practice can only be to the good and would serve simultaneously the interests of the Council and those of the countries affected by its decisions. We all want to help parties to a conflict solve their problems, and by giving them a hearing we would gain a better understanding and therefore be in a better position to do so.

We said at the very outset that the question of reforming the Security Council was neither simple nor easy. We also said that it was not insoluble. During its last two sessions, the Open-ended Working Group made some measure of progress. We are on the right track. We

should keep up the pace and, above all, take full advantage of the momentum of the Organization's fiftieth anniversary to move ahead and make even greater progress in the future. The complexity of the issue is such that we, like several other delegations, want to avoid setting deadlines for the completion of our work. We do want to recall, however, that unless within a reasonable period of time we reach a comprehensive agreement acceptable to all, we will all have to continue putting up with the status quo, and, as we all know, maintaining the status quo is not what we want. We all want to reform the Council so that it can become a more effective and efficient authority that enjoys the full confidence of all the States Members of our Organization. This is our common goal.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): Before calling on the next speaker, I should like to request all speakers to be brief and not to exceed ten minutes, in any case.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I would like to begin with a word of congratulation and admiration for the work done in past months by Ambassadors Wilhelm Breitenstein of Finland and Nitya Pibulsonggram of Thailand, the two Vice-Chairmen of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The progress made has been largely due to the tireless efforts, imagination and inexhaustible energy with which they carry out their work.

The reform of the Security Council is one of the most important reforms needed in the United Nations system. It is also one of the most sensitive reforms, and, moreover, it is most clearly overdue. The main reasons for the priority nature of this reform have been stated many times. As a result, consensus has practically been achieved in respect of the understanding that the Security Council must be expanded and that its methods of work must be improved.

This is necessary if the Security Council is to have a more representative character, more support among United Nations Members and a higher degree of legitimacy in its actions. Furthermore, the right type of expansion and reform could strengthen the effectiveness of the Security Council and contribute to the authority of the United Nations in general.

I do not wish to explain in detail Slovenia's views on the question of reform of the Security Council. Let me emphasize, however, that Slovenia considers the reform of the Security Council one of the three main areas of United Nations reform, as explained in the letter, contained in document A/50/528, from the Slovenian Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the subject of reform.

In the Working Group we presented our opinion on the reform of the Council in some detail on several occasions. Furthermore, our basic views are presented in the report of the Working Group, among the submissions by Member States and groups of Member States, on pages 68 to 71 of the English text. Slovenia joined the group of Member States that held similar views and participated in the elaboration of a discussion paper containing the main ideas supported by that group. We continue to hold the views presented in that document.

Among them I wish to mention, first of all, the need to increase the number of both permanent and non-permanent seats. There should be two to five additional permanent members. In choosing those members, account should be taken of candidate's global influence and capacity and their willingness to contribute to the maintenance of the international peace and security.

Furthermore, there should be an appropriate increase in non-permanent membership in order to preserve a balance in the composition of the Security Council. The reformed Council should have a total of 20 to 25 members. At that size, the Council's representative character would be enhanced, while at the same time the necessary ability for prompt, effective and continuous action, as required by the Charter, would be preserved.

On the other hand, we believe that the rule on the ineligibility for immediate re-election of a retiring non-permanent member of the Security Council should be retained as a necessary safeguard for the protection of small and medium-sized Member States.

Furthermore, we do not favour any direct or indirect introduction of new categories of members of the Security Council, since we believe that such an approach would lead to the marginalization of all non-permanent members of the Security Council other than those entitled to, for example, more frequent rotation or any other special status.

We agree with those who favour regulating and limiting the use of the veto, and we hope that in the coming year the Working Group on reform of the

Security Council will have a meaningful discussion of this matter.

We also maintain the view that the General Assembly should be able to formulate a set of recommendations concerning the Security Council's methods of work. The existing innovations in methodology have improved transparency to some extent, but more needs to be done.

In this connection, I wish to mention a proposal that France — a permanent member of the Security Council — made about a year ago. France proposed open orientation debates as a means of creating a better balance between, on the one hand, discussions that are necessary for an appropriate assessment of the situations being considered by the Council and, on the other hand, negotiations leading to specific decisions by the Council. While negotiations involve the Council's members only, open orientation debates would give other interested United Nations Members an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution prior to negotiations leading to specific decisions. As the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands reminded us earlier today, the Security Council has, in general, approved that proposal. We the Members of the United Nations now await its implementation.

Another area in which there could be improvement without the need to change the text of the Charter is that of Security Council reports to the General Assembly. Special Council reports to the Assembly are envisaged in Article 15 of the Charter. The Security Council should be encouraged to give life to that provision whenever appropriate.

The General Assembly, on the other hand, should take the necessary measures to provide for meaningful consideration of the Council's annual report and its special reports, if any, with a view to making useful recommendations to the Council.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the Working Group on reform of the Security Council will soon enter a very important stage. We agree with the Permanent Representative of Portugal, who, in his statement yesterday, stressed that flexibility will be necessary and that bridges between different views must be built — and crossed — so that we may make genuine progress in our work. Choices will also have to be made. We are hopeful that the Working Group will be able to manage the process of negotiations in a manner that will result in much-needed success.

Mr. Leghari (Pakistan): Let me convey my delegation's deep appreciation of the outstanding manner in which the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council was guided by His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, the President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassador Breitenstein of Finland and Ambassador Pibulsonggram of Thailand. My delegation would like to thank them for their efforts in preparing the report of the Working Group in document A/49/47. We look forward to working with the President of the current session of the General Assembly.

Pakistan participated actively, constructively and positively in the consultations on Security Council reform that were held during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. However, as is indicated in the Open-ended Working Group's report, despite extensive consultations differences continue to exist on the key issues before the Group. These differences warrant further, in-depth consideration of the issues before we move any further. Besides, a whole range of proposals and ideas have been put forward. These should all be examined objectively and dispassionately, with a view to ensuring the best interests of all Member States.

The proposed reform and enlargement of the Security Council is an important subject, which, in any review, must be understood in the context of the current climate in international relations. Following the end of the cold war, hopes were revived that a strengthened and more effective Security Council would emerge, both as an important deterrent to aggression and as an instrument to reverse aggression wherever it occurred. It was hoped that, freed from the dictates of a bipolar world, the Security Council would be able to come, swiftly and decisively, to the rescue of the victims of abuse and conflict.

The Council's failure to implement its resolutions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, its inadequate response in the case of Rwanda and its inability to implement its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir have all contributed to a sense of insecurity. The gap between the rhetoric of the Council's resolutions and its performance on the ground to implement them has widened. Instead of a new world order supervised by the Security Council, we are faced with a number of disputes and conflicts raging across the globe and with a Security Council that has not been able to implement its own resolutions, or has done so in a selective manner.

It is in the context of today, and with a full appreciation of its strengths and limitations, that we should seek to promote ways and means of making the Security Council more effective in the preservation of international peace and security.

The Security Council has inbuilt inequities. It is composed of a very small number of member States. It is divided between permanent and non-permanent members — those with a veto and those without. Pakistan firmly believes that the primary objectives of our present exercise should be to promote greater democracy, equal participation, transparency and accountability in the Council's work. We are convinced that if these objectives are kept in mind, ways and means of enhancing both the effectiveness and the efficiency of the Council, in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter, can be explored.

The number of United Nations Members, which stood at 51 in 1945, has increased to 185 in 1995. Pakistan fully shares the general desire of Member States to strengthen the Security Council's role, as well as to review its composition in order to reflect the substantial increase in the membership of the Organization. We also believe that the overall composition of the Security Council needs to be balanced in terms of representation — in particular, representation of the large number of small and medium-sized States that have joined the United Nations.

The Council's current composition lacks balance in terms of geographical distribution. However, any attempt to give various regions more representation should appropriately reflect the circumstances in each region. The arguments for equitable regional representation must be viewed in the context of the legitimate concerns of all Member States in a particular region. Any accommodation of regional representation should not fuel the tendencies towards hegemony and domination that are manifest in some regions. Once again, our approach must uphold the principle of the sovereign equality of States and must avoid consecrating regional inequalities.

The concept of permanent membership is at variance with the principle of sovereign equality, which is the operating principle of the United Nations. The present inequity that is inherent in the concept of permanent membership should therefore not be further strengthened or consolidated. It is in this context that Pakistan is against any increase in the permanent membership of the Security Council. Such an expansion would merely serve to accommodate the interests of only a few countries and alienate the smaller and medium-sized countries, which constitute an overwhelming majority of the General Assembly.

As my Prime Minister, Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, stated in this very Hall on 24 October 1995:

> "The Security Council needs enlargement, but not in its permanent membership." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 39th meeting, p. 24)*

Pakistan would thus like strongly to advocate an increase in the category of non-permanent members that would proportionately reflect the increase in the general membership of the United Nations, particularly the large number of small and medium-sized States. We strongly support the view that the Security Council's reform and the expansion of its non-permanent membership should be a comprehensive exercise with a view to enhancing its effectiveness as well as its efficient functioning.

Pakistan would like to reiterate the importance it has always attached to the reform of the United Nations. Pakistan fully supports the reaffirmation made only recently by the non-aligned Summit in Cartagena that both the reform of the Security Council and its expansion should take into account the principles of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical distribution.

There is also a need for transparency, accountability and democratization in the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. Pakistan remains strongly opposed to the creation of any new centres of privilege within the United Nations system. Is it justified to extend centres of privilege when the entire world is moving towards democracy? These centres are, indeed, anachronistic, anti-democratic and contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States enshrined in the United Nations Charter. Any resolution that did not take into account these concerns of the vast majority of the United Nations Member States would not be acceptable to the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like to remind this Assembly that the question of the expansion of the permanent membership was considered only recently, at the special session of the Inter-Parliamentary Council held in New York in August and September 1995. During the consideration of this subject by that Council, this idea was firmly rejected and was therefore not reflected in the Final Declaration issued at the conclusion of the special session.

In addition to the expansion of the Security Council, there are other aspects that need equal attention in the reform process. Any meaningful review of the Security Council's functioning must encompass the broader and vital issues of democratization and transparency in the decision-making process. Democratization can be achieved by strengthening the Council's relationship with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies with a view to evolving a joint working relationship between the Security Council and these bodies in the maintenance of international peace and security. An effective mechanism should be established to convey the General Assembly's views and recommendations on peace and security to the Security Council. This would enhance the participation of the general membership of our Organization in the Council's decision-making process. A working group of the Assembly could be created to analyse the Council's report before its consideration in the plenary Assembly.

The Open-ended Working Group could also examine the possibility of creating a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly under Article 22 that could consider and discuss questions related to international peace and security. In addition, the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Security Council should meet regularly to coordinate the work of the two bodies.

The primary responsibility of promoting greater transparency rests with the Security Council. We are gratified to note that the Council has taken many positive steps to enhance its relationship with the General Assembly. However, more concrete steps are required for closer consultations with United Nations Members, particularly the troop-contributing countries, in pursuance of Article 44 of the United Nations Charter. A subsidiary organ of the Security Council could be established under Article 29 to monitor peace-keeping operations and to institutionalize a system of thorough consultations with troop-contributing countries at all stages of any peace-keeping operation.

The direct linkage between economic and social problems and political upheavals in various parts of the world is very obvious. There is an urgent need to strengthen the relationship between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council so that economic and social factors are duly taken into account in decisions relating to international peace and security. There is a legitimate reason to fear that the current global economic crisis could lead to potential conflicts, both within and among States, in the future. The Economic and Social Council could serve in many cases to provide the Security Council with an early warning of impending upheavals and conflicts.

It is of fundamental importance that the outcome of our efforts be in strict conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. It must be based on consensus and agreement among Member States. A decision on this question that lacks the support of the general United Nations membership will be counterproductive. It may erode general support for the future role of the Security Council and cast doubt on the sanctity of its decisions.

In conclusion, I would like to state that Pakistan will continue to work diligently with other United Nations Members to evolve a consensus on the reform of the Security Council that advances the cause of peace, security and the aims and objectives of the Charter. We have to be patient in this important exercise, without being tardy.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to express my admiration for the important efforts of the former Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group, Mr. Amara Essy, President of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, and his two Vice-Chairmen, Ambassadors Breitenstein of Finland and Pibulsonggram of Thailand, who led the Group in an outstanding fashion at the last session.

The question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been the subject of our particular attention in proportion to the Council's vital role and responsibilities in the maintenance of international peace and security. My delegation has carefully followed the deliberations of the Working Group over the past two sessions. As all are well-aware, consensus has yet to be reached on the issue of increasing the Council's membership and other related issues, such as improving the Council's working methods, despite the number of meetings held by the Working Group over the past two sessions.

This, however, should not discourage or prevent us from persisting in our efforts; indeed, we should step up and intensify those efforts in the coming period in order for us to be able to reach a consensus formula regarding the composition of the Council and the required reforms. We are aware of the fact that the path we shall have to tread towards our goal is long and arduous. However, we shall be able to reach our goal if we eschew our

differences and set aside considerations dictated by narrow national interests. As stipulated by Article 24 of the Charter, the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States. In the interests of all, this must continue to be the case.

Kuwait's interest in the deliberations on increase in the membership of the Council stems from our desire to preserve the Council's effectiveness and capability in the maintenance of international peace and security, which came to the fore when the Security Council opposed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The Council's outstanding firmness and effectiveness during its consideration of that matter in 1990 made possible the 1991 liberation of Kuwait. That effectiveness must be bolstered and maintained in order to deter future aggressive tendencies by States that would violate international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter and thus threaten international stability and security.

Kuwait shares the interests, problems and ambitions of other small States in the ongoing discussions regarding the increase of Security Council membership. Small States must not be left by the wayside when an agreement is reached, for that could result in an unbalanced, undemocratic Security Council that would not embody international legality as fully as it should. For these reasons, we hope that we will be able to reach agreement in accordance with the principle of the sovereign equality of all Member States and the principle of equitable geographical representation. There is also a vital need to agree on machinery within the framework of regional groups to give small States access to membership of the Council.

Kuwait supports increasing the membership of the Security Council for many reasons, foremost among which is the large increase in the membership of the United Nations, the many changes that have taken place on the international scene and the new international situation that has generated numerous challenges which make it necessary to adapt the organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, in a manner that would enable them to rise up to those challenges.

My delegation believes that any increase in the membership of the Security Council must be geared to the achievement of the purposes we seek, namely: strengthening the Security Council in order for it to be able to discharge the major responsibilities entrusted to it in the maintenance of international peace and security; the new composition of the Council must reflect the universal nature of the United Nations and conform to the reality of the General Assembly, which now has 185 Member States and through which members of the Security Council are elected; enhancing the prestige of the Council is bound to strengthen international commitment to abide by its resolutions; honouring the principle of equitable geographical representation is bound to make the Council more representative and democratic; any increase in the Council's membership, must not impact negatively on its effectiveness. The Council's effectiveness must be protected and enhanced.

With respect to reforming the Security Council's working methods and developing its relations with other United Nations bodies, especially with the General Assembly, Kuwait supports all proposals aimed at increased transparency and clarity in the Council's work and at better dissemination of information to the Member States and vice versa. The Council should continually consult with all the States directly or indirectly concerned in any of the matters it deals with. This would enhance the credibility and legitimacy of the resolutions it adopts on such matters.

While Kuwait commends and welcomes the steps and measures already adopted by the Security Council along these lines, we hope that such steps and measures will be institutionalized and incorporated into the Council's rules of procedure.

My delegation notes that many concrete and constructive proposals have been put forward with respect to the right of veto; these deserve study by the Working Group with a view to finding a consensus formula that could satisfy all parties concerned and enable the Security Council to carry out its responsibilities without impediments.

My delegation believes that the proposal put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement to review the membership of the Security Council every 20 to 25 years, would be useful in narrowing the gaps between the differing views of States and in paving the way towards agreement.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that the deliberations of the Working Group will be successful and will lead to a consensus that would strengthen the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security and enable it to draw on the experiences of the past to better understand the present and to be better equipped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Programme of work

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to make an announcement concerning the programme of work of the General Assembly.

I should like to inform members that agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council", will be taken up on Tuesday, 28 November, in the afternoon. The list of speakers for this item is now open.

Members are reminded that the list of speakers is also now open for agenda item 38, "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", which, as announced yesterday afternoon, will be considered on Tuesday, 21 November, in the morning as the second item.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.